

McKinney runs lifetime best, Burnett closes career with medals

By Sean Douglas

In the illustrious history of Marion High School athletics, Zaimar Burnett will go down as one of the most talented, and fastest, athletes to ever don the Purple and Gold.

And in his final showing at the IHSAA Track and Field State Finals on Friday night at Ben Davis High School, Burnett put an exclamation point on a remarkable high school career, collecting a pair of top-five finishes in both the 200 Meter Dash and the Long Jump.

“We are excited for Zaimar,” Marion Head Coach Nate Larson said. “To be able to experience this opportunity is phenomenal.”

The senior started the afternoon with a career-best jump of 23 feet, and despite not taking his final three jumps, he finished in third place.

“I felt good in the long jump,” Burnett said after the event concluded. “I was feeling with that [23-footer]. I’m satisfied. Top-three, I’m satisfied.”

Later in the afternoon, Burnett blazed in the preliminary round, winning his heat in 21.97 seconds to qualify for the final round.

However, in the time leading up to the finals, he was not feeling 100 percent.

“When I ran my prelims, I was feeling so terrible,” Burnett said. “Then I came back here [to the tent area] and just sat here for a minute. Then, I went to the podium to get my [medal for the long jump,] but I



Oak Hill’s Mason McKinney set a lifetime best in the 400 at the State Meet in Indianapolis. **Photos by Sean Douglas**

was sitting there for hours and hours, and my stomach was killing me.”

After finally getting his third-place medal in the long jump, Burnett did not have any time to go through his usual routine before running the race.

However, Burnett battled, and his final race as a Giant resulted in a runner-up finish. He shaved .06 seconds of his preliminary time, placing second with a time of 21.91 seconds.

“I didn’t get to stretch or warm up, so I got on the blocks and took off,” Burnett said. “I had to go with the flow and fight through it.”

“In the 200, he was a lit-

tle tight,” Larson added. “He maybe wasn’t as fluid as he normally is, but to come up here and get second, that’s awesome.”

In his high school career, Burnett finished with three medals at the State Finals, including a sixth-place finish in the 200 in his sophomore season, while also qualifying for the 200 final in his freshman season. He helped to set the bar for those who will come after him, and his accomplishments on the track will not soon be forgotten.

“He’s been the pillar of the group for a long time,” Larson said. “And I think he’ll still be that because he will still have that influence

over the younger guys that are still coming. We couldn’t be prouder of him.”

“It means a lot, man,” Burnett said of donning the Marion Purple and Gold. “It’s an honor to play for the Marion Giants.”

Oak Hill also had a staple of their program run his final race as well on Friday—Mason McKinney capped off a tremendous high school career in his own right with a season-best race in the 400 Meter.

While he finished in 15th place running against a strong field of competitors, McKinney set a new personal record, finishing in 49.99 seconds.

“You break 50 seconds,



Marion’s Zaimar Burnett finished second in the 200 and third in the Long Jump at the State Finals at Ben Davis to cap off his high school career.

and you finish 15th in the state of Indiana in a one-class sport...you keep your head up,” Oak Hill Head Coach Paige Brunner said. “He had an amazing career for us, and an absolutely outstanding senior season. You hope that kids around him [will] pay attention and realize that’s what a state qualifier does and that’s what a state qualifier looks like.

With the conclusion of Friday’s event, one of the last bastions of Oak Hill’s 2019 regional championship team will be moving on to the next stage of his athletic career. But like Burnett for Marion, McKinney’s accomplishments both on and off the track will resonate throughout the program for years to come.

“Time was a goal today. Moving up in the top-20 was a goal today. To be where he is, I couldn’t be

happier for him. I think as the smoke clears, he’ll realize how good of a career he had, and I hope he has a great career at IUK.

“We don’t do what we did this year without Mason McKinney. He took it as seriously as anyone we’ve had. We are county, conference, and sectional champions because of guys like Mason McKinney. Top-15 in the state—great way to end your career.”

In other results, Mississinewa’s Hayden Nelson finished 10th in the 100 meter at 11.17, while the Indians’ 4 x 100 relay team of Nelson, Jayden Crick, Peyton McPeak, and Trevon Hess placed 23rd with a time of 43.85. Additionally, Eastbrook’s Hayden Raikes finished 16th in the 110-meter hurdles in a time of 15.30, while Marion’s Cubie Jones placed 22nd in the long jump with a distance of 20’6”.

Madison-Grant’s season ends with loss to Wapahani in regional semifinal

By Sean Douglas

After winning its first sectional championship since 2012, Madison-Grant knew the challenge that awaited in the regional semifinal against No. 1 ranked Wapahani at Lafayette Central Catholic.

Despite a valiant effort, a six-run third inning for the Raiders, and a few uncharacteristic errors by the Argylls, proved costly as Madison-Grant’s season came to an end in a 12-1, six inning loss.

The Raider collected 12 hits in the contest, but only one was for extra-bases. Additionally, at least five of them did not leave the infield.

“They are No. 1 for a reason,” Madison-Grant Head Coach Scott Haley said.

“Coaches I talked to about them after we beat Eastern, they all said the same thing. They are going to battle you. They are going to be gritty. And if you try to throw fastballs by them, it’s not going to happen.”

After a scoreless opening two frames, the Argylls recorded the first out of the third relatively quickly. However, a fielding error allowed Wapahani’s second batter of the frame, Paul Fisher, to reach first base safely.

The miscue created a snowball effect, as the Raiders recorded five hits in the inning, including four straight, while scoring six runs to take a lead they would not relinquish.

“There were a couple of uncharacteristic mistakes that we made that helped

open the door,” Haley said. “But I don’t think it would have mattered.”

Wapahani added two more runs in the fourth to increase its lead to 8-0, before scoring four more in the sixth to put an end to a remarkable season.

Madison-Grant recorded five hits in the contest, two coming off the bat of Mason Richards, while Teagan Yeagy drove in the Argylls’ only run of the contest in the fifth frame, scoring Justin Moore.

While the 2021 season comes to a close for the Argylls, the future of the M-G baseball program could not be brighter. The Argylls won their first sectional crown since 2012, won their first conference championship since 2001, and their

See Baseball, page 12



Nick Evans set to devlier a pitch in M-G’s regional semifinal contest against Wapahani, Justin Moore scored M-G’s lone run in their loss to the Raiders. **Photo by Sean Douglas**